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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 003479

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [IZ](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: INDIA CONGRATULATES NEW IRAQI GOVERNMENT

REF: NEW DELHI 3402

Classified By: PolCouns Geoffrey Pyatt, for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (SBU) In its first official statement about Iraq since the January 30 elections, on May 7 the GOI released a summary of PM Manmohan Singh's message to Iraqi PM Al-Jaafari, which welcomed the formation of the new transitional government and offered to assist the country's reconstruction in areas of mutual interest (text in para 3). The MEA did not release a copy of the letter, and the Iraqi Charge told PolMilOff on May 9 that he had not seen it, but welcomed the sentiment it contained.

Comment

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2. (C) This is a small, but positive step. With the exception of references to Iraq in some of the Foreign Minister's recent press appearances, the GOI has been quiet about Iraq since the January elections. We believe the Charge's April 30 demarche to MEA Joint Secretary (Americas) S. Jaishankar played a role in the statement, especially in light of the MEA Gulf Division's subsequent comment that it was unlikely the GOI would issue a formal statement congratulating the new government (Reftel). In the context of continuing hesitation about Iraq among India's political parties, the Prime Minister's move toward Al-Jaafari can also be viewed as a positive gesture toward the US. End Comment.

3. (U) Begin GOI text:

Press Statement on the Formation of the Iraqi Transitional Government (7 May 2005)

The Government of India welcomes the formation of a new transitional government in Iraq headed by Prime Minister Dr. Ibrahim Al Jaafari.

The Prime Minister has sent a message of congratulations to Dr. Jafaari, wishing the people of Iraq success in their efforts towards building a peaceful, stable and prosperous Iraq. In keeping with India's long tradition of close political, economic and cultural ties with Iraq, the Prime Minister conveyed that India values and would like to further strengthen the bonds of friendship between our two countries and peoples, and would be happy to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq and cooperate in areas of mutual interest. End GOI text.

4. (U) Minimize considered.

BLAKE